

Something Else

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Summary: Mason Redfield was a member of a research facility studying forerunner constructs, now he and the other members of the research facility are trapped, cornered inside and unable to leave, for the Flood have awoken. They rampage through the facility, killing and infecting everyone in their path, including Mason. A story on what could happen, if you could only be lucky enough.

## 1. Pilot

**\*\*Author's Note: Don't have time to edit this, I'll come back for it in though! [Brackets are supposed to be in italicks.]\*\***

Screaming, Mason frantically backpedaled, every fiber of his body telling him to MOVE! He stumbled, tripping over a large unsecured power cable. Falling to the ground, Mason tried to roll to his stomach so he could gain traction, but to no avail. The flood infection form pounced, leaping onto his chest. Mason tried to bat it aside, but the parasite had a painfully firm grip on him. Immediately the parasite began to burrow through his chest. It broke through his rib cage, taking up residence in the center of his body, next to his still beating heart.

In agony, Mason tried to scream, but all that surfaced from his lips was blood. The feeler-stalks of the infection form punched back out through his chest, quivering. He felt his head push back, his upper torso bulging and expanding, with the waving feelers of the flood form directly in the center of the chest. The bones in his right arm shattered and were pushed aside by a large flood tentacle, which emerged from his palm. Large boils, about four to five inches across formed across his back and sides, filled with an unknown material, likely his internal organs.

Against his will, his now-mutated body rose to its feet, and began shuffling down the corridor. The pain had receded, as he guessed there wasn't much left of him to feel pain. A couple UNSC marines ran through an intersecting corridor ahead, firing blindly behind them.

Noticing him, the marines stopped, bringing their weapons around to bear on him. Only one marine managed to get a shot off before a dozen flood combat forms overwhelmed them from behind. The shot went directly through the 'face' of the infection-turned combat form that controlled Mason's mangled body, right about where his heart would normally be. Mason's body stumbled then collapsed, losing all motion. He lay on the grime covered metal floor, writhing in renewed agony. He tried to shift his legs, and found that control had once again been returned to him.

Rising shakily to his feet, he slowly lumbered away from the other flood infection forms, unaccustomed to the weight and balance of his mutated body. He twisted, looking behind him, wondering if the other flood would notice if something was amiss. They did not.

\* \* \*

><p>About two days prior, Mason had been part of a team working on a forerunner structure, and unwittingly released the flood. It had moved quickly, wiping out about 75 percent of the original crew in the first day. He had been hiding in the armory when a group of flood had cornered him. He destroyed most of them with a well placed explosive, but had been forced to flee the survivors. He was no soldier, he was a scientist! He escaped into the hallway, tripped on a cable, and this was the result.<p>

He sighed, the sound coming out as an erie moan. Then, he stopped, foreign instincts kicking in, making him listen closely. A whimper. His body turned, feelers twitching, looking in the direction of the sound. A door, he moved towards it, all awkwardness forgotten in the rush of instincts. He pounded on the door, hissing audibly. Smashing his fists against the door, again and again, the metal beginning to buckle. Once more, and the door collapsed, falling backwards into the room. He stalked malevolently forward. Stopping in the center of the living chamber, he waited, listening closely. The sound of breathing reached his ears. He turned sharply towards the source. A closet. Reaching out, he tore the flimsy wooden door from its hinges hurling it behind him.

In the confines of the closet, a human, a host, lay in the corner. He walked forward into the closet, then stopped. His eyes, or whatever passed as such on a flood combat form, now clearly saw the human. A small girl, tears running down her cheeks, whimpering in fear. All but the barest trace of what had compelled him to find this girl, and use her as a host to propagate the parasite he had become, disappeared.

Attempting to force words out through his mangled wind pipe and mouth, left him producing a low, frightening moan. The girl sobbed uncontrollably now, any louder and she would attract flood other than himself.

He wanted to help, his human side told him it was the right thing to do, but how was doing that even possible? A thought came to mind. He awkwardly turned around, raking the room with his gaze, searching for the object he needed. He located one that would suffice, a data pad on the nearby shelf in the room. He grabbed it with his less mutated hand, and, struggling with his malformed digits, typed in as quickly as he could, "I don wnt tp hurt yu don be afraid"

He turned to the girl, who he noticed had stopped crying and now looked semi-hopeful, but still very afraid. He handed her the tablet, gesturing with his arms towards the text he had clumsily written. \_Please let her know how to read...\_ She glanced at him, wiped a tear from her eye, and looked back down at the tablet.

"You-, you want to help me?" The girl warily asked. Mason nodded as best he could.

Surprising Mason, the girl jumped up and hugged his torso as well as she could, around his tentacled arm and boils. She began sobbing once more, this time from relief. Through her tears she forced out words, "I-, I thought I was going to die. I thought, that-, that there was no one left."

Hugging her as best he could, he tried to comfort her the only way he could think of. Unable to speak, he produced a low rumbling deep in his throat. Surprise showed on the young girl's face as she looked up at him giggling. "Are you purring?" He paused, thinking. \_I guess I was. Interesting.\_ He shrugged an affirmative. He typed into the data pad once more "what i yor nam?" Reading it she replied, "Anna."

A loud clang in the outside hallway alerted him to the presence of others. He tried as best he could to motion her to be quiet. He typed hastily into the tablet she still held. 'Wait momet I go chek outsid mayb dangrous' She looked down, read it, and nodded.

Mason exited the closet, moving as quietly as he could. He prowled over to the entrance to the room. He cautiously poked his head out into the corridor. At the far end of the hallway, five small shapes poked through the wreckage. He could make out sharp yips and barks as they communicated, indicating Covenant Grunts. They slowly meandered down the hallway.

As they passed the room Mason was hiding in, he tried to hold his breath, only to find he wasn't actually breathing to begin with. They passed without incident, till one stopped, holding up a hand to stop its comrades. It seemed to be listening closely, then pointed towards the end of the hallway opposite the one they had entered. Two flood combat forms barreled towards the grunts, the grunts opening fire on the flood with their plasma pistols. Mason seized the opportunity to attack, leaping at them from behind. He quickly wrapped his arm around one's head, twisting sharply. A loud crack could be heard, and he pivoted smoothly, punting another grunt into the wall. Of the two infection forms, one had been quickly downed, the other was strangling a grunt. The grunt's comrade was shooting the flood in the back, but to no avail. The grunt being strangled ceased moving, but the second flood also slumped to the floor, lifeless. While this transpired, Mason had dealt with the fourth grunt by hitting him with a large metal pole that had been conveniently laying there. Mason grabbed a pistol from the ground and quickly blasted the remaining grunt in the face.

He double checked both directions, ensuring no enemies remained. He ran back to Anna, who had returned to her previous position in the closet. "Is that you?" She inquired fearfully. He nodded, motioning her to follow him. She rose, trailing after him closely, loosely hanging onto his side. When she caught sight of the dead covenant and flood, she gripped him tighter, almost latching onto him. He placed a hand on her shoulder to comfort and reassure her.

\_Where could I take her that would be safe? Lets try the control room.\_ He checked his directions mentally. Left, right, up the staircase, across the corridor, left. On three separate occasions, Mason and the girl were forced to hide in an abandoned room or closet, and wait for the enemies to pass, weather it be flood or covenant.

\_Almost there, almost there...\_ They finally reached the control room door, which was locked. "Mommy says that only the important people know the password." She contributed. Inwardly smiling, Mason keyed in his pass-code The door slid open, permitting the pair to enter. They didn't need to enter the room to see that it was empty. Just about everything was untouched, the lights just now coming on. The far wall, however, was completely destroyed, dirt and rock covering a good two thirds of the room.

[This is no good.] Sensing his displeasure, Anna said "Maybe my moms room? I know how to get in". Mason considered it, then nodded and motioned for her to lead the way. It was better than nothing. They walked for about two minutes, this time with Anna leading the way. When they came to the Director's quarters, Anna stopped, saying, "Were here!" [Anna's mother is the Director? Wow.] Mason put his good hand, his left hand, on her shoulder to hold her back from entering the password for a moment. He took the tablet from her, hastily keying in what he wished to say. "if thers anyne i there, they migh soot at mee. Try to conince them tha im you pet, or soethig."

She read it, then nodded. "Okay. I'll do my best." Mason motioned Anna to go ahead. She walked over to the door and keyed in a long, complicated string of letters and numbers. The padlock clicked, and an LED flashed green. The heavy metal door hissed, pressure releasing, and slid open. He hid out of sight of the entryway, trying as best as he could to peer inside without being noticed.

The room had been fortified with sandbags and even a machine gun turret. Several marines all had very dangerous weapons pointed at the door. Several civilians were huddled in the back of the room. "Mommy!" Anna squealed in joy, running into the room, hugging a blue coated, dark haired woman very much resembling Anna.

"Anna! I thought I would never see you again." The woman gathered Anna in her arms, clearly relieved to see her. One of the marines yelled out "Someone get that door closed!" A high ranking officer, a colonel, Mason thought, went over to Anna, and, crouching down to her level, asked in a clear tone, "Young lady, did any one else come with you, did you see anyone?"

"I didn't see anyone. But did see some dead aliens, and I made a new friend!" She stated ecstatically. The officer looked clearly confused. "Friend?" Anna nodded, explaining, "He's still outside. I think he's afraid of you. As long as you don't shoot him, I don't think he'll hurt you." The Colonel looked wary, but allowed Anna to move toward the door.

As if she were calling a dog, Anna yelled out "Here boy, come here! They won't hurt you, I promise." \_She pulls this off pretty well.\_ Attempting to adopt a more flood-like posture, not actually that hard he had to say, Mason slowly crept out of the shadows, and towards the lit entryway, feelers twitching wildly.

The marines yelled in shock, all training their weapons on him. "Wait! Wait!" Anna frantically yelled, "He won't hurt you! Look!" As Anna moved to run to Mason, his mother reached out to grab her, but the Colonel caught her arm. "Wait Espera, I want to see what she does." Anna ran up, clinging to Mason's side, him smoothing her hair in what he hoped the humans took as a show of affection. He noticed that he had instinctually begun to rumble deep in his throat once again. \_I hope they buy this...\_

"Fine. Bring it inside." Several men objected, but the Colonel waved their protestations away, saying, "I think it's clear that we have to let her bring it inside with her, or lock her outside with it. Trying to kill it would only leave more of us dead. Close the door once they're inside."

The men continued to watch Mason suspiciously, still doubtful of his tranquility. One civilian woman, recognizing Mason's outfit, yelled, "Oh my god! It's Mason!"

"It's not Mason anymore," contradicted Anna's mother, "Don't let yourselves be fooled. That Flood may have Mason's body, but Mason is dead, and that thing is just moving the corpse." She said derisively, shepherding Anna away from Mason.

Mason, left quite alone, retreated to a vacant corner, curled up, and promptly fell asleep.

**\*\*Author's Note: Read, Review, Enjoy! Flames (In accordance with the Geneva Convention) are not permitted to be used firearms.**

><strong>

**\*\*Afternote: Went back through, edited everything and formatted it properly. \*\***

## 2. Something More

**\*\*Author's Note: Broke the pilot into two parts, so it doesn't come as a shock to me that this finished so quickly. Just had to edit it and respond to the only person who reviewed (For shame, everyone else!). Hmm, gonna have to think of some incentive. I swear, the name Mayborne sounds so familiar! It's ringing bells, but I can't tell from what, so anyone have any ideas what it might be from? Read, Review, and most of all Enjoy! Flames will be used to assist the survivors. \*\***

Espera curled her lip in disgust of the Flood parasite that had been allowed into their makeshift sanctuary. She stalked angrily over towards Colonel Mayborne.

"Before you say anything," Mayborne preempted, "I want you to know that the first sign of violence from that thing, and I \_will\_ put it down, but until then, my word is final."

She frowned, only slightly put down by his decree. "Look, I just want you to talk to Anna, convince her that that parasite is dangerous, and she should be careful around it. She acts like it's a puppy, or something! She won't even listen to me!"

Mayborne considered for a moment, then nodded. "You know it won't do any good, but nonetheless, I'll talk with her." He stood from his seat, and walked to Anna, who was angrily sulking up against a wall. He turned and sat down next to her. From here they had a perfect view of the combat form. "Anna, why do you cause your mother so much stress?"

Grumbling, Anna replied, "Its not my fault, she just doesn't understand."

"Anna, your mother is right, you know it's dangerous. It may seem friendly, maybe even cute, but at the end of the day, its still just a parasite, living in the body of a human."

"I do know he's dangerous, he killed those aliens earlier."

This was new. She didn't mention it before. "It attacked it's own kind?"

She smiled, the first time since her mother had taken her aside. "No, silly! He's not an alien! He's, actually I don't know what he is, but what he killed wasn't like him."

Mayborne pondered this, then pulled several medical documents up on his tablet. "Did they look like any of these?" The photos were of the known Covenant species.

"Uh," Anna paused to think, looking all the orginisms over again, "Hmm, that one, maybe? I didn't see them till after he killed them, so I didn't get a good look. But I could hear them, they sounded like dogs. Really annoying dogs."

That matched the description of Grunts all right. This was only going to serve to complicate getting out of here. While he pondered the current development, he absently asked Anna, "Why do you like that thing so much?" For a moment, he thought she might not respond.

"He saved me. When there was no one else there, and I thought I was going to die, he came for me, and saved me. At first, I thought he was going to kill me, but he told me he wouldn't hurt me, and he followed me all the way here."

"Wait, you said he told you?"

"Well its not like he actually told me, he can't really use his mouth ya know. I just kind of felt that he wouldn't hurt me."

The Colonel nodded in understanding. There's something that she's not telling us. "Of course. I know what you mean."

Mayborne stood to leave, and Anna frantically interjected "Your not gonna go kill him, are you?"

"No, I said that he could stay unless he tried to hurt someone." Anna sighed in relief, and continued with, "Can I go sit with him? He looks really lonely." Mayborne nodded, than continued walking, till he was stopped by Director Espera. "Well? Did you convince her to leave it alone?"

"No, we have a bigger problem right now than a little girl with her pet parasite; The Covenant are on the planet."

\* \* \*

><p>Mason woke with a start, a small body slamming into his side. Either a Grunt had tried to tackle him, or Anna had jumped on him. Either way, he wasn't in much danger. Mason twisted, looking at her, and doing so, lightly brushed her face with the feelers protruding from right below where his head would normally be. "Hey! That tickles!" Sitting up, he sat with his back facing the corner, and Anna just to his right. She became very interested in the tips of his feelers, which had soft, red, fur-like tufts sprouting from them. She played with them for a moment, then waved them away.<p>

It seemed that she was taking her first opportunity to fully examine him, as she was now hesitantly poking at some of the boils on his side. He waved her hands away this time, as he wasn't sure if that was safe; he had seen some of the other Flood explode. She complied, and resorted to playing with the tentacle extending from his right arm down past his hand. The tentacle didn't just come out of his arm, in most places it was his arm. It was grafted onto, into, and through his arm, and could only move freely after it emerged from his palm.

She poked and prodded, rubbed and touched, and generally just fulfilled the bounds of her curiosity. She stopped however when she came to the human head that jut backwards, as if someone had shifted it out of the way, and replaced it incorrectly. She whispered fearfully to Mason, "Did you kill a human and take over his body, like mommy said, or did you just used to be human?"

To this, Mason held up two fingers. "You killed two humans!" Anna said aghast. Mason frantically shook his head/torso. "Then what? Oh, answer number two?" Nod. "Oh. You must be very upset about what happened to you. Why did they call you Mason? Did that used to be your name?" Nod. "Okay then. Do you mind if I call you Mason? Kinda suits you if you ask me." He was quite okay with that, so he nodded that it was fine, and she leaned against his side quietly, humming a tune foreign to his memory.

Mason now took his time to completely examine the room in which the surviving humans resided. It wasn't as small as his quarters had been, but it still wasn't all that large. The rooms consisted of a bathroom, master bedroom, closet, and kitchen, with a small desk covered with paperwork. Counting the humans, he noted seven marines, six civilian scientists, the Colonel, Anna's mother, and Anna. Seventeen life forms, counting himself. The majority of the furniture had been pushed to the sides or were being used as barricades.

Most of the civilians were sitting on the floor in the master bedroom, just about as far away from the entrance to the rooms as they could make it. Two marines stood at their posts, keeping vigil, the others recuperating or lounging lazily. Espera and Mayborne stood near the bathroom, debating their next course of actions quite heatedly. Anna and Mason lay in one of the corners in the kitchen, distant enough from the civilians that they wouldn't squirm too much at the thought of a Flood Parasite sharing their sanctuary.

Mayborne left Espera, walking towards the group military personnel.

"Listen up soldiers, we can't stay here much longer, as food supplies are low and we need a way to get a distress signal out. Problem is, we can't think of any place that has enough food aside from the mess hall, and that's a death trap, we can't scavenge because of the danger of discovery, and on a side note, none of us soldiers knows how to send a distress signal anyhow. So all were good for right now is following through on whatever Espera comes up with. Unless anyone has any other suggestions?" He waited, but none of the soldiers spoke up. A marine Mason recognized as Jacob spoke up. "What about the docking bay, sir? A supply ship docked right before the outbreak."

Mayborne pondered this, stroking his chin. "That might just work. Good work..." He paused waiting for Jacob to fill in the blanks. "Uh, Private Stanner, sir," Mayborne continued, "Good work Private. I'll discuss the possibility with Espera. Make sure you're all ready to go at a moments notice." The Colonel turned away from the soldiers and briskly walked towards the Master Bedroom, where Espera was telling the scientists much the same thing that Mayborne had told the soldiers.

Mason watched the soldiers resume standing guard, chatting lightly amongst themselves. Jacob and a one other began cleaning their respective weapons, talking amiably.

"Yeah, I got a girl back home, just hoping I can see her again now." Jacob provided sadly.

"You love her?"

Proudly, Jacob looked up from cleaning his weapon, meeting the other's eyes, "I'm gonna marry her. I got a ring picked out an' everything."

"For her sake too, I hope we make it outta this alive."

Slightly put out, Jacob returned to cleaning his weapon, silence filling their conversation. Then the other marine said something that made Mason perk up.

"What're we gonna do with that thing that the Director's daughter brought back?"

Shrugging, Jacob responded noncommittally, "I dunno. You know the Colonel's orders though, we can't kill it unless it attacks someone."

"Do ya think maybe it could be an asset?"

"What do you mean?"

"Like, if it would help us fight or something like that?"

"Man, that's the stupidest thing I've ever heard. What possible reason would it have to fight its own? The only reason it's not killing us is that girl. I still dunno why though. Maybe it thinks \_she's\_ a cute pet."

"Maybe, but what if the other ones tried to hurt her? Then what?"

"I guess," Jacob tested carefully, "then maybe, maybe, it would fight



with us. It might just as easily take her away though."

"Yeah, you might be right about that."

Mason stopped paying attention to the marines as their conversation faded into silence. Would he fight his own? \_No! Not his \_own. Whatever he may be physically now, he was not a Flood. He was human. Somehow. When push came to shove, he would stand and fight alongside the humans. \_You even think of yourself as other than human. You call \_them\_ humans. So what are you?\_

Then, Mason felt, something. A presence, akin to when you feel someone watching you, or someone behind you, but more definite. It felt, faint, vague, but determined. It grew stronger, and Mason felt it, whatever it was draw inexorably closer.

"Quiet!" A marine near the door yelled, and silence was immediate. "Listen." \_"Skitter"\_ Another moment passed. "\_Thump"\_ A long, eerie, wailing moan penetrated the heavy metal of the door. Anna clutched his side desperately, fearful of what monsters might be outside. The sounds intensified, implying a large host of enemies. "\_Bang, Bang, Bang"\_ The Flood outside, for it could be no other, began to attempt to break down the door. A woman amongst the civilians began to weep.

"Places." Coldly collected, Colonel Mayborne walked through the group of marines and took up position on the chain-fed machine gun turret. "Yes sir!" The marines scrambled for cover, propping weapons up to fire at the doorway. The feeling of trepidation grew stronger, and Mason began to lose himself in the swarm. A tug at his side, Anna gripping him harder, brought him back to reality however. The door joints began to buckle and crack. The door burst, sending shards of metal spinning across the floor.

Flood combat forms spilled through the entryway, but were met with a punishing hail of bullets. The marines armor piercing rounds made short work of the combat forms, but the seemingly endless tide pushed past their fallen brethren and proceeded forward, like an avalanche, deadly and unstoppable. Two combat forms leaped from the churning mass of forms, each tacking down a marine with their tentacled arms. From there the battle tipped in the favor of the Flood. Out of ammo, the marines were forced to stop firing and reload, or switch to a sidearm. The flow of combat forms had ceased, but only three marines remained standing, Jacob, Mayborne, and one other. Two scientists had armed themselves with pistols and were attempting to assist the marines, but were unlikely to do any real damage to the Flood with their aim.

The odds ran 7-ish flood combat forms and 8 infection forms, against 3 marines and 2 scientists. Sensing the humans impending defeat, Mason pushed Anna into the bedroom, and threw himself into the fray. Jacob downed three infection forms with his pistol, aiming quickly. Mayborne continued firing his chain-gun, yelling bloody murder, taking down another two combat forms. The third marine lunged at a combat form with his knife, but missed and was quickly butchered. Surprising the Flood forms from their flank, Mason snapped the already fragile spines of two combat forms, killing them, and swatted an infection form. One of the scientists actually managed to hit something, splattering a infection form's body matter along one of the rear walls.

Mayborne sprayed the last of the flood combat forms with the overheating chain-gun while Jacob focused on sniping the last two infection forms with his pistol. the colonel bore the gun down on Mason, but recognized him and let off the triggers, nodding in thanks. "\_Blam!" \_One infection form down, the final Flood form scuttled wildly towards Jacob, but he sighted in on it and pulled the trigger.

\_"Click."\_

"Crap," was the last thing Jacob had time to mutter before the infection form launched itself into his sternum, bearing him to the ground. Jacob grappled with it, frantically trying to crush or dismember it, but to no avail. "Don't shoot! You'll hit Jacob!" Mayborne yelled. The Flood infection form wriggled out of Jacobs hands and latched into his chest, preparing to burrow through. Instinctively, Mason, pushed, toward the infection form with his mind, and something snapped inside Mason's head.

The infection form froze, and Mason could [feel] it's emotions, it's primitive mind, and found that he could control it. He forced it to release Jacob, and it scuttled over to him, climbing up Mason's shoulder.

"Can you understand me?" Mayborne prompted Mason.

Mason hesitated, then nodded, shocking most of the humans, Mayborne and Anna excluded.

"I thought so. Is that thing still dangerous?" Motioning towards the infection form on Mason's shoulder. Mason hesitated once more, then shook his torso/head. Mayborne took his word for it, and yelled to the remaining scientists, "Grab what you need, or what you can carry. We're leaving." No one questioned him.

**\*\*End note\*\*\*\*:** I felt like my description of Mason's various mutilations and mutations was a little lacking. What's your opinion?**\*\***

End  
file.